



File Code: 1950 – Whistle Stop

Date: May 19, 2005

Subject: Planning, Development and Management
of the Whistle Stop Project

Public Scoping Letter and Request for Public Comment

Dear Friend of The Chugach,

We are writing to inform you about, and seek your ideas towards a Chugach National Forest and Alaska Railroad proposal for the planning, development and management of a Whistle Stop Project, which encompasses portions of the Glacier and Seward Ranger Districts from Luebner Lake south to Trail Creek.

Over the past year, the Chugach National Forest and Alaska Railroad have established a business partnership designed to develop and disperse access to over one hundred thousand acres of relatively inaccessible and remote backcountry within the Chugach National Forest. The project would develop a transportation permit, or pass, linking trails with interconnected “Whistle Stops” at specific locations along the Alaska Railroad track, (a rail corridor otherwise closed to public access for safety reasons). Through a combination of backcountry site planning and first hand knowledge provided by numerous project participants, we have identified potential development of six backcountry Whistle Stops in the project area and a variety of facilities such as trails, cabins and dispersed campsites that would accommodate dispersed recreational use in this area of the National Forest.

Included is our proposed action for the development and management of the Whistle Stop stations and associated recreation facilities in the project area. Our goal is to follow the guidelines of and meet the direction outlined in the Chugach National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (2002), while simultaneously meeting the goals and management direction of adjacent landowners and project partners.

Please examine the proposed action and send us any comments you feel are important for this project. It is helpful when comments include specific issues to be considered or suggestions to improve or change the project, as well as your ideas for alternatives to the proposed project. We have provided forms on which to write your comments, or you may use your own format to write, call, email or fax your comments to us. Remember, in order to be most useful to the planning team, your comments should be received by 30 days from the date of publication in the Federal Register, which was May 16, 2005. As part of the NEPA requirements, we are initiating a public comment period with this Scoping Notice and by filing a Public Notice in area newspapers.

Once we receive comments, we will continue with the NEPA analysis. Our analysis will include alternatives to the proposal, developed from comments received during this scoping phase, and

will disclose the environmental effects of all alternatives. Once that is published, you will have another opportunity to comment, providing feedback on the draft environmental document. We will then respond to those comments, and a decision will be made by the Chugach Forest Supervisor.

Please send comments through any of the avenues listed below:

Glacier Ranger District
P.O. Box 129
Girdwood, AK 99587-0129
Phone: 907-754-2352
Fax: 907-783-2094
Attn: Adam McClory
e-mail: comments-chugach-whistle_stop@fs.fed.us

We recognize the tremendous potential for developing, responsibly managing and highlighting the historical significance of this portion of the Chugach National Forest and Alaska Railroad route. We welcome your comments on the project and your ideas for partnership opportunities. Thank you.

Sincerely,

JOE L. MEADE
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure